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COMPT 74-0092

AGENCY SUPERGRADE SYSTEM AND STRUCTURE

A. Recent Supergrade Ceiling Reductions

25X9 Supergrade positions are established in the Agency under the Director's authority as set forth in the National Security Act of 1947. As of December 1972, [] supergrade positions had been established under Agency procedures. However, these internally authorized positions were never fully filled as 25X9 the ceiling on actual supergrade employment was limited to [] in accordance with agreements with OMB. In December 1972, then Executive Director-Comptroller William Colby ordered a reduction in the number of supergrade positions to the OMB-approved ceiling of [] to take effect by the beginning 25X9 of Fiscal Year 1974. This was done to eliminate the confusion which the former system had engendered, to reflect more realistically the Agency's need for and use of supergrade personnel, and to make CIA practice more nearly consistent with that of other Federal agencies.

25X9 By 30 June 1973 this reduction had been completed and the position structure established at [] positions. Thus, during FY 1973 the number of authorized supergrade positions was reduced [] In order to accomplish 25X9 this reduction, however, [] positions which had previously been evaluated at the supergrade level were arbitrarily reduced to GS-15.

B. Evaluation and Establishment of Supergrade Positions

25X9 Since 1956, a formal supergrade evaluation system has been in effect in the Agency (Attachment A). This system is based on an evaluation and ranking of skill, responsibility, decisions and contacts consistent with practices followed in other comparable Federal agencies for top-level positions. It includes examination of each position to develop a numerically scored and weighted evaluation of the relationship between that position and selected benchmark positions. A current reevaluation of present supergrade positions in the entire Agency is now in process for all Directorates. Adjustments are required because of the establishment of certain new programs of high priority including the Intelligence Community Staff, National Intelligence Officers, and the Office of Political Research, and also because of a substantial number of consolidations and reorganizations at Headquarters in the wake of last year's extensive surplus exercise. Work on this should be completed by 30 June 1974.

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C. Excess of Supergrade Ceiling Over Personnel

Examination of Agency supergrade positions and personnel in recent years indicates an excess of supergrade ceiling over personnel averaging about 5% before June 1972 (Attachment B). Because of the major personnel reductions imposed by Mr. Schlesinger during 1973, this percentage rate substantially increased during that year; as of June 1973, [REDACTED] authorized supergrade positions were not encumbered by personnel at the supergrade level. While the October 1973 promotion panels approved a substantial number of promotions to supergrade rank, the addition to the total number was offset by those personnel retiring during December so the excess of supergrade ceiling over supergrade personnel at the end of December 1973 was still an atypical [REDACTED]

Other agencies with similarly stable supergrade structures indicate a normal vacancy rate not substantially lower than our normal of 5%; AEC, for example indicates that their normal vacancy rate is 3 to 5%. Because of certain peculiarities of this Agency, it is unlikely that we will ever be able to manage our use of authorized supergrade positions so as to average significantly less than [REDACTED] underslotting rate.

First, supergrade personnel (as well as lower graded personnel) are rotated among Directorates to the extent practicable. This is done in order to provide for better utilization of personnel and better understanding by supergrade personnel of overall Agency responsibilities. Within the Operations Directorate primarily, but also to a considerable extent within the Management and Services and the Science and Technology Directorates, supergrade personnel are rotated between Headquarters and the field as operational requirements necessitate. This rotation, coupled with the normal attrition of senior officers, often results in overslotting and underslotting of personnel for varying periods of time. In the case of underslotting of GS-15 personnel in GS-16 positions, the initial period of assignment constitutes a period of training and on-the-job qualification for advancement to supergrade rank. We regard this process (which is largely responsible for our normal excess of supergrade ceiling) as essential whenever an Agency employee, whatever his past performance record, is moved to a substantially different and more responsible assignment sometimes in a country or operational environment in which he has had little or no previous experience. Of the Agency's [REDACTED] authorized GS-16 positions, [REDACTED] are overseas and an additional [REDACTED] are

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As soon as an individual has proven his capability to perform at the supergrade level, he is promoted. A similar practice has been followed in the Department of State Foreign Service for many years and is considered essential to administration of the Foreign Service system. Such an approach virtually guarantees, however, that there will always be--at any given point in time--a number of supergrade positions not then filled by personnel having supergrade rank.

In addition to our policy of rotation, our career service panel system helps contribute to a less-than-100% encumbrancy rate. Under the Agency personnel management system, career service panels are established to evaluate employees for promotion on a competitive basis. This competitive ranking procedure is in some respects similar to that of the Department of State's Foreign Service. Review panels are established in all Directorates to evaluate supergrade personnel and GS-15 personnel for eligibility for promotion to supergrade status. These panels consist of groups of supergrade personnel, as many as 15, who must review all personnel folders and records as well as other information relating to the qualifications of the individuals in determining eligibility for promotion. The supergrade review panels meet only twice a year and make their recommendations in May and October. Thereafter, promotions are made, consistent with ceiling limitations.

Since the time required by the panels is substantial, it takes supergrade personnel from their normal assignments for extended periods. We believe it impracticable to increase the frequency of panel sessions to more than twice a year, even though by such a procedure we could reduce the excess of supergrade ceiling over on-duty personnel. By June of this year, for example, when all the panels have met to consider promotions, we anticipate that the present excess of supergrade ceiling over personnel will be reduced to substantially less than 5%. Our career services will by June evaluate individuals currently at the GS-15 level for promotion to supergrade rank in those career services where ceiling is available, and there is no reason to assume that most nonsupergrade personnel now occupying supergrade positions won't be promoted.

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We believe that the reduction in our previously authorized supergrade positions to the present OMB-imposed ceiling of which was directed by Mr. Colby in December 1972, served to reduce our supergrade structure

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to the minimum level consistent with our overall responsibilities. Further, we believe that the underslotting rate of [REDACTED] which will again be the normal level following completion of assignment (and promotion) action required by unusual personnel changes (losses) during the past year, should be recognized as reasonable and logical for the effective administration of supergrade ceiling and management of supergrade personnel in the Central Intelligence Agency. 25X9